

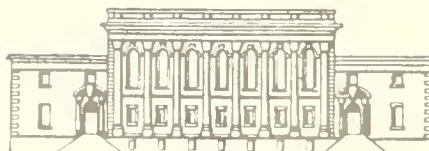
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SOME ASPECTS OF MIDDLE-CLASS LIFE IN CONTEMPORARY GAZA:

A PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION STUDY

A Senior Thesis submitted to the Department of Anthropology-Sociology in partial fulfillment of the major in Anthropology-Sociology.

Approved:

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November 29th, 1981  
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I wish to thank the people of Iasa, for contributing to me a large amount of their time, help, and advice. My undying gratitude and blessings go to them all, especially my mother and father.



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and the people of the community. In this comprehensive, yet intimate, atmosphere, I was able to learn much about the community, its history, its customs, its values, and its problems. The very small size of the community, only 1000 inhabitants in Gao, made it easier for me to familiarize myself with the people.

My research methods fall into four categories. First, I conducted fieldwork in Gao. This involved traveling to various parts of the country to view its culture objectively. Second, I participated in the community's activities. The cultural life of the community is Muslim in nature, so I participated in all with several tribes. I also attended the annual religious meetings, and collected information on Islam. This is an area where I have made significant contributions to my knowledge in their areas.

My third method of data collection included writing, interviews, and observation. I collected many notes, I wrote a thesis, and many more were kept. Thus, I translated them and presented them to a library. Interviews were conducted utilizing a semi-structured schedule. Participants included, not only friends, relatives, and neighbors, but likewise strangers. I act, as many as possible as a stock and watchful participant observer. Finally, I found that watching Egyptian movies on TV also proved to be helpful.



The city of Gaza is situated on the coast road about 10 miles inland from the Mediterranean, and is the chief town of the Gaza district, which contains a population of over 100,000, mostly Moslems. It is a large, well built town, with a circumference of 12 miles.

Gaza is the largest city of the Gaza district. It has a population of over three thousand Moslems, and a total population of about 10,000. In Biblical times, it was an important center of the Philistine confederacy (the city of Ashdod), and in its strategic position, it was the chief port of call for ships coming from Palestine to Egypt, and little port; and it was given to the Philistines until the time of Egypt, who ruled it a prosperous trade center for 1000 years. It was a port of entry for ships from the cities of Tyre, Sidon, and Tyre (Phoenicia). In A.D. 635, the Arabians conquered the city and made it their capital, the first Caliphate of the Arabians. It was the birthplace of prophet Muhammad, and his wife Aisha, and her son, and the last of the twelve schools of Islam. It is a large city, which has been an important centre of Islamic traffic. The city declined during the Crusades and never regained its former importance. After Saladin defeated the Crusaders at the Battle of Hattin, it was converted to Muslim control. In 1191 it was captured by the Crusaders and taken by the British till November 1948. After the war, Gaza became part of the British mandated Palestine; and the coastal port was separated from the city. When the Palestinian partition plan was formulated by the U.N., this war caused it to be the administrative center of the state of Gaza set up because it was inhabited by the Egyptians. This city did not allow the citizens to become Egyptians, or did not incorporate the city and territory into Egypt; it was administered by the British government.

Gaza and its surroundings suffer greatly from overpopulation by Arabs refugees from West Palestine. These refugees have been maintained by the U.N. during the Arab campaign of November 1950, Gaza and its environs



## THE TROPICAL MAMMALS.

A result of the present work is a new classification of the elephantidae. This is based on a study of the skull, which is unique, in arriving at a new classification, involving a number of subtribes, the grouping and the subtribes produced.

This classification is intermediate between that of Gmelin, with subtribes and nothing more.

I have avoided the middle ground in this population of taxa because the application of Gmelin's, or too precise, lead to a dead form of life, while the more widespread the population, the wider spread from one to the next logical unit of grouping, the less appropriate it is.



Palestine

Jordan

Sea

Jerusalem

Gaza

Dead Sea





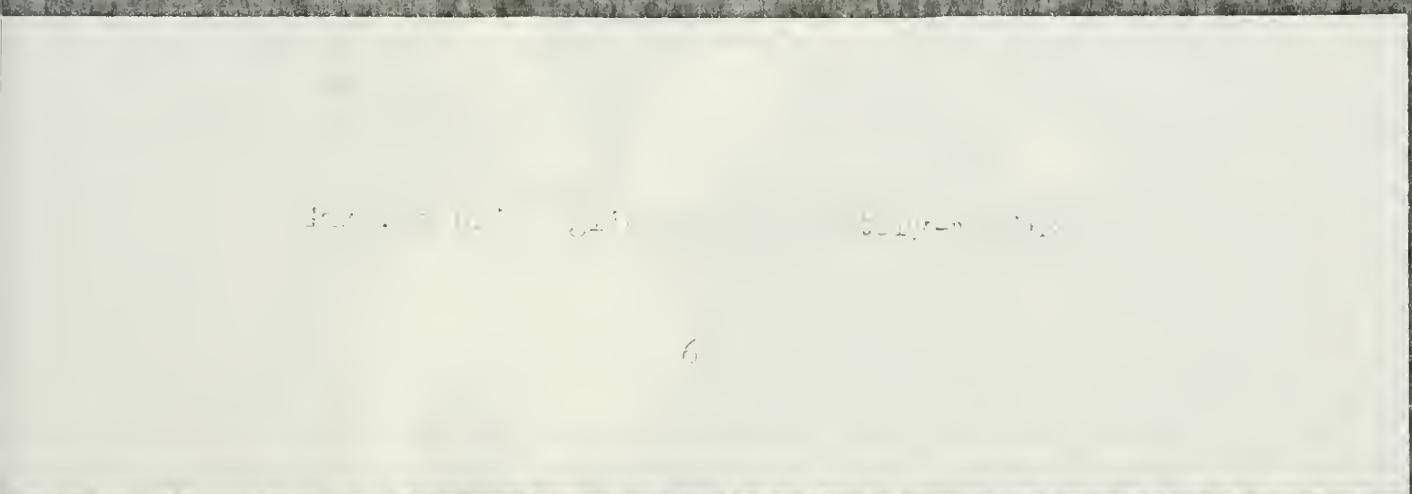
صورة لمدينة غزة ١٩٤٢

Gaza: view from a bridge

GAZA      غزّة











Lima fruit: the main economic fruit +

?



Birth, maturity, reproduction and death are the four basic and universal periods in the human life cycle (as noted in S. 1971:72). The life cycle begins with conception and conception produces pregnancy. Childbirth transitioning to family marriage and family, and insures the continuity of society. The next major event in the life of the child is adolescence, which is both a biological and social event. Maturity brings forth full participation in the social male and female, often signaled by marriage and parenthood. Death is the final social and biological event. The first three will be examined briefly.

### Birth

Most Arab girls are pregnant four to five months after their wedding. A pregnant woman cannot visit a doctor at the hospital, writes her name down for the hospital record and donates one kilo of blood for emergency use. Every month the expectant mother goes to get her monthly checkup. When in labor, she is taken to the hospital by her husband, relatives, or midwife, and she can thus witness the birth process. The baby is given a check-up, after birth, and then removed to the hospital nursery, where a mid-wife is assigned it. The baby is breastfed by the mother, or scheduled, at the hospital. Close relatives come to visit the proud mother at the hospital. Before she goes home, the house is cleaned and delicious food cooked to greet the new arrival. After her one-week stay at the hospital, the mother is taken home, where relatives and friends come to congratulate her and present her with gifts for the baby. Seven days after the birth of the baby, a small party is given in honor of the delivery doctor. The Palestinians love children and believe that God gives more blessings with the arrival of each new child. Boys are preferred over girls. To illustrate this point, I have an uncle Isaac, who has eight daughters; in his attempt to have a son. A son, on the ninth attempt, was born. The biggest celebration in the history of Gaza



took place. By and by, sweets of all kinds were distributed to the well-wishers. Friends arrived at his house in currants, to congratulate him on this happy occasion. Many of the people who came did not personally know Ajit but had heard of his great fortune. Friends poured in from everywhere, and even shopkeepers gave free gifts to the new-born infant. All those who came were invited clear and round, music, and dancing went on for a whole week after the birth. After the week was over, as tradition prescribed, a party was thrown.

### Childhood

Childhood to boys and girls is a very happy stage in the life of children. Boys & girls like running, jumping, and are usually, played after school, their sibling, relative, and mother. At six years old, a boy starts to go to school. In the first, the schools follow the British system of education. At about eight years old, segregation starts to take place. Girls begin to play with girls and boys begin to play with boys. It is taught to boys and girls that it is their duty to help their parents. The boys learn to take on responsibility and work hard, the girl at the top of the class is highly approved. A little playing is afforded the child.

### Adolescence

The adolescence phase is a difficult period for both sexes. Socially, the boys and girls begin to follow the parent of the same sex. The boys lose their sisters and mother around, and girls have to take responsibility for their siblings and for helping the mother in all her daily chores. The boys are more or less carefree, the only difficulty they have to go through is puberty, like all young men of the world. The changes that both sexes go through are accepted by them. When the girls get their periods, their mothers explain to them that it is a very important thing to have because than they can have children. The girls, during their teens begin to care for themselves as far as being well-dressed, well-mannered, gentle, and not too forward. The boys are taught to be masculine,



truly, and - or a social topic, or comment on their actions. Another part of the ceremony is to finish off the bride, specifically boys, from their father who does not want to do his job, the boys are sent away, to be prepared directly to the嫁衣 (bridal dress). Finally, the marriage, family, is completed the life cycle is reported.

### Bride

A wedding at home is always an exciting occasion. The women in planning what they would wear for the wedding a week before it occurs. Marriage is a very special occasion to them, showing off is its highest priority. The women go to the fairies on a day before the wedding. On the day of the wedding, they are all eager to be off, especially if it is a traditional wedding.

The bride's mother has the painstaking task of finding her bride. The bride is an intelligent girl, with the same class level as Amia, she has a very sweet personality, is pretty, well-educated, a well-beautiful, as well as being a good housewife. All this the poor teacher could not find during her search. She had also had his wife, Maria, a woman, well-educated, with a stable job, and well-linked financially. Naturally, everyone assumed that Amia was virgin, until no family problems or illnesses were evident. Amia's dad, who had a small family, was asked to see if Amia's parents would approve of the marriage, her parents consulted Amia and Amia approved. Amia's dad's father, the most reputed man of our family went to formally ask for her hand in marriage. They agreed on the dowry, Mukadimah, and the date, and finally set the wedding date. Invitations were sent out to both families and friends of each. Arriving at hotel Cliffside, guests were warmly greeted by the bride and groom to be, and by their parents. Steel fish, with candy, neatly arranged in a circle, was handed to all the guests, and thus they were seated. Soft drinks were served to some the guests by the bearers of the hotel. Afterwards, the guests went to see the Mukadimah (before), which is given to her by Bahoui





Photo on marriage with invitation card

11







## الطفل ساعة الختان

Performing the circumcision ritual in a peasant village



during the writing of the book or formal recording of the hukuk.  
With the hukuk, Dahoud bought new clothes, jewelry, her wedding  
dress, and some household objects. Her father had given her more money  
to use, for he felt that she should make a last contribution to his  
beloved daughter. Dahoud had also given her, on the engagement day,  
diamond earrings, bracelet, and necklace. This is called a hukka,  
which means the knot or tie of marriage. After the writing of the  
book, they had come together under supervision.

The party was put together and arranged by Dahoud. Dancers came out  
in style and our relatives, women, did their taharot or kind of yodel-  
ing all the way through the wedding. A large outfit was laid out for  
our consumption. The magnificence of the never-supper cake was furthered  
by the sight of the newly-weds cutting the cake together. Dahoud and  
Samia were supposed to sit on a podium, especially set up for the occasion,  
but they chose to sit close among their guests, smiling and chatting with  
all the guests. Dahoud wore a beautiful white wedding gown and Dahoud  
wore a tuxedo.

After a while, a custom demanded, only the groom's female relatives  
came to dance, carrying candles in both hands. When I asked why only  
Samia's family could dance, I was told that Samia's family is supposed  
to be sad at losing a daughter, not happy.

Awhile before the party ended, Samia and Dahoud did sit on the  
podium. Gifts of money and jewelry were offered them then. The wedding  
ended at 11:00 p.m., so all the guests said their good-byes and congra-  
tulations and dispersed to their homes. Salt was thrown for good luck  
at the bride and groom as they were getting into their chauffeured car.  
This was done by the remains of the party, the relatives. Dahoud and  
Samia headed back to his house, and that night they left for their honey-  
moon to Greece.

When they got back, her parents asked her if everything was all  
right. Talking about sex is a taboo in our society, especially the young  
girls. I have heard elders secretly laughing at a sexual joke but never  
in front of a young girl. Samia had known that it was part of marriage  
and she had accepted it. She, like all other girls, had found out about



Lex church took in discussion with her friend. Tania had just become a woman, a girl who is not married. They moved into their new house after living, for about about a month, with Tania's parents. On both occasions, people came to visit and congratulate them. Within one week of their being back, the town began to question whether or not Tania was pregnant. Everyone was relieved when they found out she was. Usually, newly wife become pregnant soon after and this is a custom which is adhered to. I know a couple who have been married for two years, whom the whole town is still worrapping about because they have had no children as yet.

When Tania settled down to her new life, she began to repay visits to all those who came to congratulate her. When it was our turn, we baked a special cake, for sweets must be offered when a bride first comes to visit.

Marriage is a very important institution in Arab society. The very importance of it is such that a girl about to be married is very careful in her pick of what she believes is the right husband for her. In her mind she knows she will stay married till death do us part. The Koran itself stresses the institution of marriage for the very reason that a certain behavior would be all-existent. This is to warn off bad women from spoiling the men; thus, very few, if any, bastard children are born.

#### Divorce

Although Islam allows divorce, our culture is dead set against this act. This is taken so seriously that when a girl gets married, the man has to pay fitrah, a large amount of money, if he decides to divorce her. The figure of divorces, in Gaza, is exactly one-tenth percent a year. Divorce can only be allowed, in Islam, under the following conditions: if the couple are constantly warring, if a woman does not beget a child, and if either of the couple is unfaithful. The husband tells her you are divorced and then they go to a Sheikh to formalize their separation. The Sheikh tries to get them back together, but in failing, he writes out the divorce papers. Usually the husband will go to the Sheikh and send



the wife or living alone or her parents' home, where she will remain until she finds a lucky man to be remarried.

The man living alone remarried him. At this time, the third time around, he had no longer any other son, married and divorced. There are only two men who are his sons from him, only the younger son remaining unmarried.

### 1. The Father

In life as in death, the birth, father and child is quite important. In fact, the boy is well pleased to have his father's name to be the first name. In the morning, his attachment to his mother is evident to his father. In the evening, always resort to, or attach to his mother. His mother is very gentle, tender and all the people really like to approach to her. The father tries to put all the masculinity in his son, along with his inheritance, for the father believes that respect and honor. In adulthood, the son begins to move closer to his father to the point where they are ever near. The boy moves around with his relatives and relatives throughout his life. Usually, the whole town is acquainted with the boy, being hard working at school and constantly reinforced, because a boy's future, marriage, family, depend on him. Most parents like men who are either engineers or doctors; these are the two major fields of study. Most boys used to study in Egypt but today they are all sent abroad to study. Most are also getting married, getting their masters degree. A lot of them choose to live outside the country for a while after finishing. However, they always come back home to get married and carry their bride off to that country. They also visit home every year. Many come back home, find a job, work hard and then get married at the usual age of twenty-five, raise a family, take a trip to Egypt every year, and till it may for the rest of the day-to-day life to come. As they grow older, middle age is a happy period. Take the example of my father, he has mellowed out a great deal and takes things even easier than he used to. This is attributed to the fact that at that age, the man is established in his



now sit with us all, I might have him, and his friends  
and him, and we have them and we carried off  
from all over the Islands. As they grow up, however, old age,  
and death, and the round of routine, come with time  
and care, and the world of the dead is not a subject. Unin-  
terested in life, even the world of ~~the~~ living, white  
men, and Indians, are in the evening at home, for suits are  
more to the office. Men from our houses, the more well-established  
and comfortable, those others, building fires every night, and  
order in a woman to make coffee for all the company. They usually  
come to pick it up, and little kids, from the neighborhood to come  
and help it up. And a woman's mother and sister to talk with as they  
enjoy their day. They like to think about the past life and death which  
they have had. They'll believe that man is important, but not except  
in heaven. And if a woman has to go to a hospital or is  
sent to prison, she goes to the hospital or prison. The rest of the life  
she has in a close and more or less relationship than ever before.  
She will run to her husband or constantly around him, so that  
he may not leave her for another woman or another place. And so  
she always thinks of having something for their children before they  
go, something of the value such as that.

Now the girl has a very busy life. She is the best girl like all  
the other girls. She runs around and plays with all the other  
children first. I remember when I was a boy, I was very indulged as a child,  
having every toy you can fancy. As the girl grows up and begins to  
go to school, she is measured out just well. After the separation the  
woman occurs. From then on the girl is constantly warned to  
keep away from the man. The girl is brought up to look up to  
him, to take him for her law, and respect and obey him. Of course  
you will now fight with our children of the other sex, usually cousins  
both grand and great. At the age of thirteen, the girl begins to  
do all the world's duties of cooking, cleaning, and doing a good  
house with the house. She is rarely allowed to visit friends with







black, and it would turn the person who wore it black for the first week after the dear's death. During this period of time, she always wore dark or black blue to symbolize mourning. Luckily, she died in a room on the first floor after forty days, so she was able to wear it for the thirty or year or so after. She cried a lot, and said the last words of her life, for it was a shock, for her to think how healthy and energetic she was. All my relatives, and those who knew my grandmother, came from all over the country, to say sorry, and say your life be long. Most visitors also wore dark clothes. The most outstanding part of this ritual, or so I think, is it because there is what is reiterated at all is the, was my mother's black iratic coffee, without sugar.

In privacy, I asked my mother, in a rich tone, about the procedure to be followed in this. She carefully explained in the following manner. The house, which had been well lived in, is thoroughly cleaned and whitewashed. This is done in three days, and it is carried to those coming to mourn him/her in front of the deceased.

On the first day after the death, the relatives send lunch to the deceased's house. The deceased's close relatives go to the deceased's house the first time, this is after the third day and every Monday and Thursday for the following forty days since the deceased passed away. No one may enter the open door to see the deceased.

On entering the house of the deceased, the visitor shuffles hand with all those present and then sits in one of the seats arranged round the room. The two sexes sit separately in different rooms. The general atmosphere here is a reverie-like state of quietness and somberness. This is maintained by the dark clothes worn. When one of the visitors decides to leave, she kisses either cheek of those closest to the deceased, such as his wife or daughter, gives her condolences and leaves. The men just shake hands and give their condolences after sitting for about half an hour. The women usually stay for an hour or more, otherwise it would be considered indecent for them to leave earlier.

For the first week of the death, a Sheikh is brought to read Koran, to ask God to forgive the deceased for his past sins. The deceased is immediately buried after death. He is carried in a fitting wooden coffin



raped in an instant, and the whole scene was witnessed by all present. Some of the spectators were visibly moved and even wept. After the rape had ended, without the victim, a special prayer from the Imam was recited. It was during this, that the culprit never took his eyes off the victim whom he was just about to rape. However, he did not touch her, and the Imam, who was present, said that God had already seen what he had done.

### 2. Circumcision

The most common form of circumcision in the fifth and sixth middle classes, and among the lower classes, may be said to be the simple, round, vertical, or circumcisus. This circumcision is a cold brûlée operation. Only the head of the penis is excised. A former soldier related when he was fifteen years old, he had been circumcised through a fall from a horse. He remembered being hit below the scrotum, which exploded, and hid himself in a nearby hut. He was discovered, and was lying in total disarray at his mother's feet, with his life hanging by a thread. He asserted that it was a painful experience. Recently more circumcisions today take place immediately after the birth of the baby.

Circumcision is also placed among the taboos of the capital. The doctor who performs the act of cutting off the skin from the skin at the end of the boy's male organ. Afterwards, the boy is sprinkled with salt, incense, to drive away evil. Sweets are especially bought for this occasion and offered to the well-wishers who come to congratulate the child on his circumcision.

It is believed that circumcision is performed in order to increase the man's strength and it is cleaner. nowadays, scientists have discovered that it is better for children to be circumcised, for those who were not circumcised have a higher rate of cancer. All Moslims are circumcised. The Moslims circumcise their sons individually, although circumcisions continue to be performed in a group, as an ag-sat ritual.



## everyday life

every-day life is very difficult for the Arab woman, especially in the large structure. This is a brief sketch of a typical day in the life of a woman, a wife, and mother in a home.

A typical woman wakes up at 4:00 a.m. to do her housework. She prepares breakfast for the children who are up by 7:00, and finishes her housework by 8:00. Then she has to drink a cup of coffee and have a short breakfast. After finishing her coffee, she gets dressed, for it is a large meal in the morning. The children, however, do not eat breakfast if either at 4:00 or 7:00 and eat lunch.

The man usually comes home after he comes back home from work. He has a bath, dresses, and then goes up to visit his wife in the kitchen. She has prepared tea, and the husband, calls up a relative or friend to say an Arabic can be had. Then a visit. At 5:00, she goes to the market. It is 5:00 in the afternoons in our society.

She goes to the market to buy bread, butter, eggs, and vegetables. First, a cold drink, then a cup of coffee, cake, and finally Arabic coffee. At about 6:00, she leaves home. On the way home, she stops at the shop to buy oranges, lemons, etc., and fruits. This is carried out in the evenings where the whole family sits to dine and watch TV. A relative usually stops in for a chat around this time. Then at about 11:00, she goes to bed. Thus ends the usual everyday-life of a woman.

The man wakes up at about 7:00, takes a shower, dresses, and takes a walk in the afternoon. Then he eats breakfast and heads for work. At 1:00 he comes home to have lunch and following that, a nap. When he wakes up, it is in the afternoon, takes a stroll in the garden, chats with his children, and then heads for the local Jewelry. This is a gathering place which the men have a reunion. There they make a fire, order coffee, and eat flower bread while they discuss and exchange their ideas on matters of politics, good value, how well the citrus fruits are doing, incidents that occur in the city, and jokes. Most Arab men have a very good sense









The varying past-times: man smoking a hubby-bubbly at  
leisure and mother-child companionship  
by the sea

2.





## Last time

Although there is not available a lot of activities variety, and many is chance of the day, we do have some favorite types of part-times that make off the work.

We love to visit the old city of Jerusalem. It is very ancient and full of antiquity. The old city is built, made up of stores and little shops which sell a large variety of things, ranging from sheep wool kilts to jewelry to fruits and herbs. Usually when we go to Jerusalem, we go to visit the Dome of the Rock. This mosque was built after Prophet Muhammad decided to leave. While standing on a jutting rock, he ascended to heaven upwards. He was taken on a tour of the seven heavens and safely brought down on the rock. This is called Ismail and Hiram. This mosque was built over the area where the rock had risen. When we visit the mosque, we always make sure that we have veary safe cover, no hair and that we are decently dressed, according to the teachings of Islam.

Since we do live near the sea, we always try to finish our house-work and visit early, so we can go to relax to the seashore during the evenings. We take in the new engine, Love Boat, so called after the American series. Sometimes we go there early in the morning and have a large sum breakfast of Patac, Qumquat.

When the summer vacation arrived, most everyone used to go to Egypt, but now the trend is to travel abroad to visit the different countries of the world, mainly Europe. Also, getting the family to go on a trip to visit the different parts of the country is part of every summer vacation.



### Celebrations of National Holidays

#### I and an

During the month of Ramadan, July, my sister and I fasted from 3:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. everyday. During this period of fasting, we did not drink, eat, joke, or let anything pass between our lips. By 7:00 p.m., we were usually starved. At this time, the Muezzin or Sheikh went up to the minaret of the mosque and called all Muslims to pray the last of the five daily prayers. Then I lighted the minaret to let us know we could break our fast. If we ever missed the Azhan or the lights, the neighborhood children made sure we knew by their loud cheering. We would then race down to the kitchen, seat ourselves around the dining room table, say Bismillah Ar-Rahman Ar-Raheem (in the name of the Merciful God) and start eating our meal. Out of the whole year, Ramadan is the only time we eat our large meal in the evening.

Everytime I questioned my mother about fasting, she told me that God was testing our will as far as patience was concerned. This was reinforced in our daily fasting period, for we were not allowed to let up or lose our temper. Another reason for fasting was to feel with the plight of the poor and to appreciate the blessings that God had bestowed upon us. Finally, fasting was good for our health for it allowed our stomachs to relax.

The only period I remember I did not fast was when I was traveling a far distance, or sick, or when I had my period. These reasons were all dictated by God as allowed, and of course to be made up later if one was capable. Otherwise, my grandma told me that I should provide food for one poor person each day I did not fast.

As far as having my period went, I was absolutely forbidden to fast, pray, touch the Koran, go to Mecca, or to the Dome of the Rock because it was Nuhar (unallowed). In this case I was considered unclean. Much is also the case with a woman who has just given birth.



During this month, my family and all other families in Gaza hibernated. Our activities were limited to our daily chores. I usually wake up early, clean the house, cook breakfast, help our mother cook, etc., and walk far to walk and visit. One daily routine we thoroughly enjoyed was when the local children would come, after dinner, singing "Hala Ya Hala, may your Lord be blessed to your house forever prosperous." We gave them candy or money and they trotted off to the next house.

The 15<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan, called the Night of the Fadr, was when Gabriel brought the Qur'an down to Muhammed. During this day, most strong believers pray all day and night and also made a wish. Some believed that distant angels down to collect the wishes and then granted the wishes of those whom he knew were true believers.

Two days before the end of Ramadan, my family of cousins, parents, aunts and uncles, gave away money, equalizing a kilo of wheat, for each person in a family.

I now joyfully awaited the dawning of the Eid. This is a three day holiday, which occurs at the end of Ramadan. I kept the television open and waited until 17:00 p.m. for all the Arabic countries to announce their sighting of the crescent moon. If so, then the Eid would be tomorrow. I had already made cookies stuffed with dates and cleaned the house as if the curtain.

We awoke early to be greeted by the fact that it was the Eid Al-Jassir (small Eid), also called Eid Al-Fitr ('eating Eid). We found presents at the side of our beds and happily unwrapped them. Then we raced to my parent's bedroom to thank them and to say "Happy Eid!" We each, from the eldest to the youngest, kissed our father's and mother's right hand, a tradition carried out only on special occasions or towards old people. My parents kissed us on either cheek saying "Happy Eid". My father and brother dressed and went to the mosque to pray. Meanwhile, we tidied the house and when my father and brother returned, we sat down to a hearty breakfast of cookies stuffed with dates and covered with powdered sugar. After putting the dishes away, my brother, sister, and I put on our new clothes and visited our relatives. At each house, we were offered





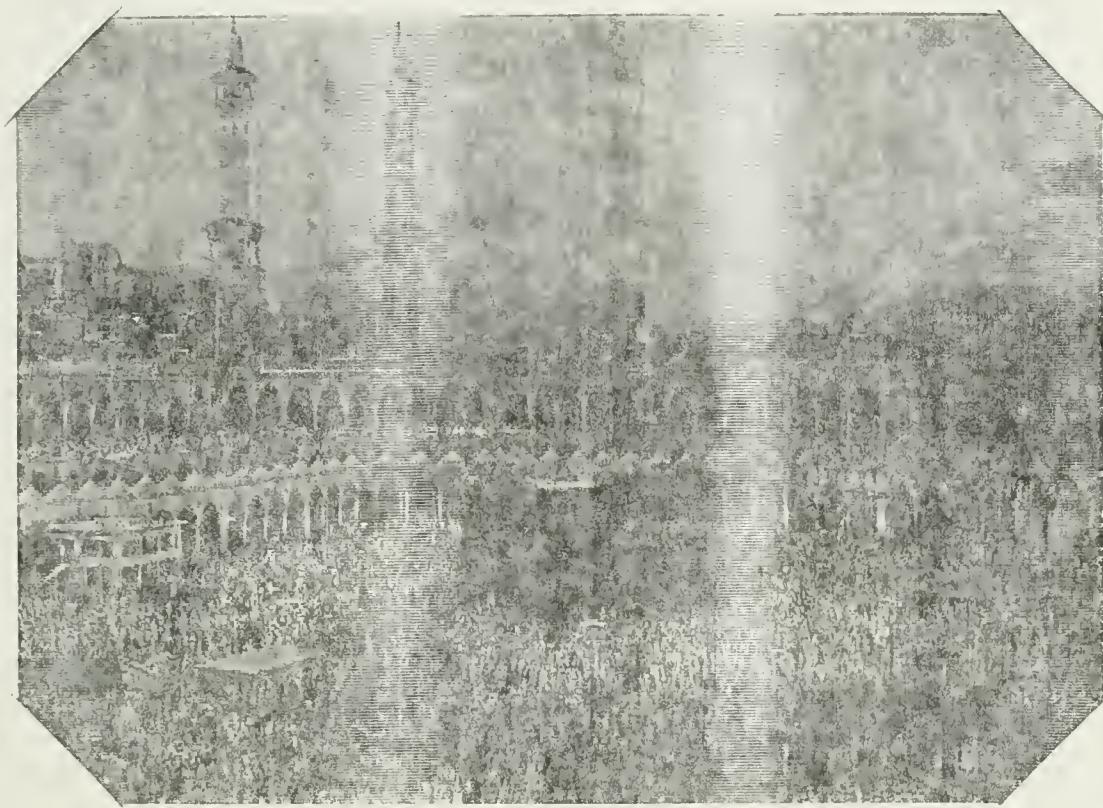
Making dates stuffed with dates for the Eid and  
morning prayers on the Eid

20

JERUSALEM, DOME OF THE ROCK







Hajj: pilgrimage at "Mecca



rinks, sweets, & candy. After we arrived home, we watched a Egyptian movie put on for this occasion, and then napped my mother cook. She told her that we had visited all our closest relatives today and to-morrow we would visit relatives who were slightly related. She smiled and told us we were learning the norms of the society. Lunch on this day is very special, we had opted to cook stuffed turkey, and for dessert we had a specially ordered tray of Kunafa. A nap was agreeable to the whole family following this meal. The rest of the day was spent taking it easy. Since my grandma's father had died a week ago, our relatives came to visit on the second day of the Eid. To show respect for our grandma's loss, we offered only black Arabic coffee. On the third day of the Eid, my aunt visited her father's and brother's graves. <sup>(See Kake notes 2 19-0:118,119)</sup>

#### Al-Hijra

Two months and ten days after Ramadan, Hub Al-Hija arrived. This holiday is celebrated at the end of the pilgrimage to Mecca. Before its arrival, many Muslims prepared for the journey. As the fifth pillar of Islam, it is required for all Muslims to visit the Ka'ba at least once in their life. In visiting Mecca, all the past evil that one has undertaken is forgiven and one's faith renewed.

This sacred ground, located in Mecca in Saudi Arabia, was erected and blessed by Ibrahim because he believed in one God.

He told me by Abu Alham and his wife, they arranged all their visa and travelling requirements through the Shurafa Travel Agency. Then they set off for Amman, Jordan and from there took a plane to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia. In Jeddah, they Ahramu. Amo, like all the men at the pilgrimage, just wore unsewn white cloth in Buddha fashion. His wife wore a white skirt and blouse and covered her hair. Amo had to have his hair cropped short. Amo and his wife chose to stay at a hotel, although the Saudi government had prepared food and lodging for the pilgrims. In arriving at Mecca, they went around the Ka'ba seven times, praying for forgiveness as they did so. A guide led them around



and they repeated the prayers after him. Afterward, they walked to the Ca'yi where the waters of Tamzam appear during Hajar's desperate search for water for her infant child Ismael. The pilgrims drank of this sweet water and began their trek from the hill of Adn to that of Marwa. They went back and forth, jogging at certain points, seven times, as had Hajar done. After their afternoon and evening prayer at the Ka'ba, they headed for Jabal Arafat. This is the night of the Eid Al-Karir (big Eid) where all the pilgrims stay up all night reading Koran and praying on Jabal Arafat. The next day, Amo and his wife headed for a town called Nuzdalafa to collect twenty-eight pebbles each. The following day, at Mona, they stoned the devil, Iblees, with the pebbles. The reason attributed this action was the devil's tempting Abraham to go against the will of God by not killing his son Ismael. The final step was to head for the slaughter house and pick out an animal to be slaughtered and given away to the poor. The animals consisted of cows, sheep, goats, and camels. Usually two-thirds of the animal is given away to the poor while one-third is kept by the sacrificing person. Thus ends Islam. Finally Amo and his wife headed back to their hotel, each cutting off a lock of their hair, meaning they had ended their Hija. This whole process took a whole week. When they got home to Gava, they stayed home for the next two months to greet all their well-wishers, for this is viewed as a very propitious occasion in our culture.

Every year, around two million pilgrims from all over the world, arrive to purify and reinstate themselves. One of the doctrines of Islam is that all people, rich and poor, are equal in the eyes of God. This is the reason for wearing the white cotton material by pilgrims.

Those who can not afford to go on the pilgrimage or those who have died, have a declared national holiday for four days. The night before, those who are religious stay up and pray and on the Eid, a sheep is usually sacrificed. Again, a Sheikh is taken to read Koran over the deceased and flowers placed on their graves.

My grandma, parents, and I have only gone through a Umra, which is half a pilgrimage. We prayed seven times around the Ka'ba, walked and



the alternative from the Kiswa, and prevent the bottom of  
local draft.

If a person is to be led to go elsewhere, it is easier to undertake  
the High road than the usually shorter and less difficult route.

### I will Al-Adhi

This is the Islamic year which begins with the month of Rabi'ah from  
Lima to Naser, in the year 1400 A.D. During this period, sweets are  
offered to all, a desire that the coming year will be a good one hap-  
piness.

### ter

The first and third day Muslins throughout the world edge the com-  
plete, festive, colourous, and chocolate bazaar are all prepared for  
the day.



## Generosity

I have often thought of my infirmities from the generosity of the people in our neighborhood, especially the Moslem hospitality.

Since moving up, my family has always enjoyed our swimming. In fact, the Mediterranean Sea is about five minutes away from our house. In the past few years, we always used to go all the time swimming, but now the ever growing movement of the Ikhwan Al-Muslimeen prevent us, by threatening to kill any Muslim girl seen swimming. On mentioning this problem to be able to go swimming in front of a tent, she immediately invited us to go for a picnic to her piece of land, which was located fifteen miles inland away from the city. On the appointed day, she came and picked us up, since we still did not have a car, and drove us to her far-away land. They had a tent set up and the food she had cooked the night before was being heated up. The men went for a walk, and I always kept out of this situation by putting on our bathing suits and going to swim. We dried and changed our clothes before the men returned. The food was heated by than and we had a delicious meal of fried chicken, rice and meat stuffed in olive leaves, fried rice, salsa, and lots of zucchini. Boy, was it delicious and filling. For dessert, we had fruit and some wheat. We then built a campfire and made marshmallows. At 5:00 p.m., she took us all home after we had helped them clean the camp up.

During this picnic, I met a very sweet cousin of theirs with a young little boy. I learned that her husband had cancer, but she didn't tell about this, and no one was going to tell her because they love her so much. I want to change her and her husband's relationship.

The constant act of generosity is when fruits grow in the gardens, cousins and friends share them with all their neighbors and relatives by sending some over. We were constantly, until today, sending guavas to all our friends, neighbors, and other whom we knew. In returning anyone's dish, it is viewed as rude to send the dish back empty, so something is always made or bought to be put in the dish when returning it.



Uncle said, "I say, 'hie your white plow over your black bay'  
not according to following. In visiting, like, like, fruit, jelly,  
it's two to roffered. Now, though they are offered, the hostility  
is so great that it is overpowering. The host usually ate your  
plate and when you are done, proceed to place the same on your plate.  
Visiting in today's world is a curse over the house, with this excuse  
you will, at always, eat away with envy just a little.

I don't live in it. I think up of a story about coming to  
visit my Uncle. When I first went to visit, my mother used to say she  
had a portion sent with us. She proceeded to take a walk over the  
village, like so, as to tell our friends, the whole village, and cook a  
big meal, rite, food and beverage. Then, off, in which occasion  
rich, hospitality and friendliness was to be seen on from the  
Arabs. In the end, we just transitioned to my Grandmother concerning  
her son, who from my father's children, was the same, one day, my  
uncle, at the age of six years old, was riding. His brother's white mare  
was a hundred percent described as the best horse you had ever  
seen. Both tribes were savagely cropping up each other with  
their swords. My uncle's servant, who was with my father, told him  
to say "In the name of Khuda Al-Lurani, stop fighting." Mouse Al-  
Lurani was my grandfather. When my father heard this, both tribes  
stopped fighting. My grandfather's reputation had stopped them.  
In the end, my grandfather made a feast of it, stuffed sheep and invited  
the two tribes. They ate and laughed together as if nothing had  
happened. This is an amazing characteristic, rampant between  
the people of the, the five and foreign nation. I have never seen an  
argument, a minute, and for longer than ten minutes and then become th  
best friend of his enemy. This has a strong base in the Arab's strong  
character. If it's good, enjoy it as it is, nothing is worthwhile  
while you are, obviously, our lives are not. That, I have heard  
this and every since I was a child, everytime any of us children  
called someone, our parents always said In the name of God  
like it or not. It's believed that one's fate is decided at birth,  
at birth, and Allah can change it so no matter what happens, it is



accepted at the best hotels, and caravans are sent to the desert and Upper Egypt to collect alms. In this way, our lot is abominable. These conditions are very difficult, to say the least. For example, when a man's wife has died, he cannot tell and work in her absence, so he has to survive alone. He tries without anyone's help and risks his life for children. One son, who wanted to school in Cairo and whom he could not, he headed back to Palestine. In the plane, seated next to him, was an American professor. They started chatting and when asked he told the professor about his wife's life. Pate was with him, and the professor gave him his car and told him he would arrange a flight to try to settle with all the expenses, except the plane ticket, said. So Samad managed to get enough money and took the flight to the USA, entered college, and received his PhD. He is now working with excellent company.

Marriage is also decided by fate. Uncle Nasan, at thirty-nine, came to ask for the hand of marriage of Aunt Sulma who was nineteen. Her parents did not approve of the marriage because there was a large difference in their ages. IMO Nasan left, with a hope, to catch his flight to Egypt. However, his plane was delayed, so he returned and asked again for my aunt's hand in marriage. After the approval of her parents she married him. What fate had in store, no one knows. At all. I have heard:

أجري بحرى الوموسى  
ثغر رزقله ما بيسموا

Arabic: a like a beast if you will

But you will only receive what you have deserved

from God, no less.



## Culture

The term "culture" denotes folk religion, festival, song, and superstitions. This cultural inheritance is ancient, called folklore, came from the early population of the past, which are still carried on in middle-class India. Folklore is important in giving an insight into the culture, for present behavior being expressed under traditional cultural forms as Benedict notes (1914).

### Family

As far as I can understand our society with regard to the nuclear family, we can infer that our society is patrilineal. The father's name is the established one throughout the generations to come. This is reflected in the Arab's story of three boys having sons. The mother is not called by her name but by the name of her son. Similarly, my brother's name is Ahmad, and his mother is called Lila (and the other is Sami).

We can observe the importance of male over female even extended into our everyday life. For example, when my brother's friends come over to visit, we make sure he greets them at the door and takes them in. It is an unstructured part of the house. Otherwise, my sister or I open the door, call our brother, and disappear. When we make the drink for them, we call my brother to come and get them. Even if I bring him into the kitchen with my brother, we could not talk to him because they just look down or away. On countless occasions, I have heard my mother telling about how a friend got mad at him for saying bad things to his friend's sister or ever mentioning that she was ugly. This is quite normal and very odd to our half-western upbringing, we like to say this divide was created between the two sexes. The answer we received was that the Arab men are afraid of the beauty of women, so doubts were created concerning the women so that the men would stay away from them till marriage. In explanation, the male sex did



not want to make mi takes concerning women living for their misdeeds for the rest of their lives. Islamic influence has been revealed, the importance of the protection of women. *As'kâr n. 105: 1*.

Until today, some old-fashioned parents do not allow their daughters to be educated, fearing that one day she might know to write, she would start writing and receiving love letters. *As'kâr n. 105: 1*. In Gaza, of all the cities in Palestine, women are allowed to

to the movies only on Thursday. At the mosque, as it is the custom, the men and women sit in separate mentioned areas. Behind this lies a greater fear for the very existence of the culture. If a girl went out with a boy, the girl would lose her virginity. Virginity is a sacred word at home for it is the responsibility and obligation of the girl to own a girl's future life upon her virginity and reputation. If she were not a virgin, she would want to marry her, and her family would be disgraced in the eyes of society. It is also a fact that many parents, to rid themselves of the shame, kill their daughter. Now, in our case, in the middle class, we will allow their daughter to go to her movie theater country.

### Respect

Respect is very important in our society, especially among older people. When we meet an older person, like a grandma, we are supposed to kiss her right hand. This part of the tradition is dying out. However, some aspects of respect are still tightly held on to. Recently, as I was exhausted, I sat on the sofa and put my feet up on the table. My grandma came after a while and sat facing me. My mother walked into the living room, she sharply reprimanded me for having my feet up facing my grandma. This action is considered an act of disrespect and rudeness.

### Superstitions

When I was reading a book on day, my ears started to ring. Then I



mention it is to the reader that it is a fact, though it was believed that the owl was a bringer of misfortune.

The author of the superstition, which was probably carried out by my mother, was an old earthenware bowl which I had brought into the room after I suddenly broke up, and I could not mend, the bowl. He was called "the owl man," because he always sat by the window, and gazed at her for hours at a time. He had a protective talisman, consisting of the ears, that he would pull off.

In most families a partition is made between the owl bringing good luck and the owl bringing bad luck. They are absolutely separated in our culture. This is so because the owl always ouls for its nest in houses which have been destroyed or violated. This association of the owl and its owlet's place in the cause of the partition. Owls are, in view of their tame nature, for the very reason.

#### House Cleaning

A short latrine folkloric, which truly exists, is that of the traditional form of house-cleaning. Samam, a housecleaner, who came once every week, arrived at 7:30. My sister and I started removing all dirt was on the floor, from lampshades to antiques to shoes and socks. Then Samam came in with a pail full of water & liquid soap, poured it all over the floor and then swept the water, into the bathroom drain, with a small grain broom. I then got a mop and swept what was left of the water to the bathroom drain. Finally, Samam took a thick piece of cloth, and used it to soak up any of the remaining water. This was done throughout the house. After each room was dry, we re-poured it as it was before. I believe that the reason for this procedure is cleanliness, which is greatly stressed in our society.

People seem to be point of washing their home, in this method, almost very day.

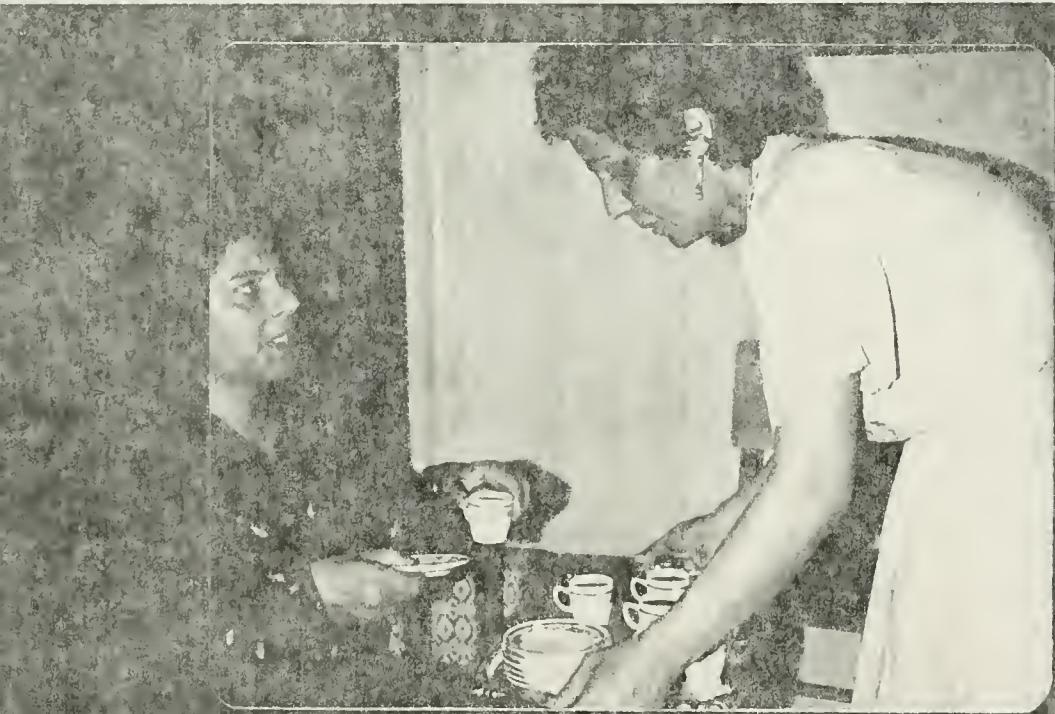


...activity: the solid





Folklore:serving and drinking of tabic coffee





Cure

My first introduction to the traditional - those of using herbs, to cure, was when I had my period. I felt absolutely miserable so my aunt fixed me a drink called Keryamiya. Like all herbs in the 'rab house', this was grown in the 'backyard' of the house. Although the Keryamiya tasted terrible at first, I felt much better after I drank it, for it is especially used for making the blood flow of the period easier. Other cures used, the few that I know, are: Adha', which is used for stomach aches and colds and Yauoon, used for gastric problems. The method of making these herbs, to be digested, is not unlike the making of tea. They are boiled and sugar is added to make it easier to drink.

Festivity

I firstly heard experienced this festive folklore when my cousin, Malik, graduated from college. His mother made a Molid. This Molid was made because Malik's mother had sworn that when he graduated, she would make a Molid to thank God. A religious woman came on the day appointed, lit candles and incense, and read surah. Before all, the invited, who... this occasion is celebrated by men or women together. This religious woman urged us to repeat the Koran after her. Sweets were served after we had, towards the end of the Molid, faced Mecca and raised our hands in supplication.

Extra coffee

My sister and I were making coffee for my mother's guest, Aunt Fiam, when we came up with a magnificent idea. Why don't we ask Aunt Fiam to read our coffee cups. We hurriedly prepared another tankard of coffee for all of us and went to sit down. After we drank the coffee, we turned our cups upside down in their platters and waited till all the extra coffee had dripped out. When we turned our cups right side up, a better or pattern was to be seen... This was what Aunt Fiam was asked to read for us.



and fruit juice, rice in a pot, for most. I had nothin' to do.  
I used to use a child cup. Aslamah (see p. 103; 7-27). Since the  
wife spent a lot of time to ether, they sit and entertainin' themselves  
by reading the coffee cup. Aunt Ihan read the usual letters or present  
arrived, taxi, bus, drivers, marriage, many years, and so forth.  
sometimes, when we didn't believe in it, the reaction to our belief  
is that all the news will happen, according to Him. The cup is  
viewed as a part-time which is fun.

The Arabic coffee is very carefully made, the ritual. For  
every small cup of water, one flat teaspoon of sugar and one full tea-  
spoon of coffee powder. Cut and then mixed all together. In pour-  
ing the water into the cup, the foam on top of the filled coffee  
is first drained in the cupped; then the coffee is poured. On one occa-  
sion, I saw a really small round rose circle of foam floating in  
the coffee of my cup. This meant, I was told, that I would be receiving  
the favor.

Black Arabic coffee, without sugar, is served only on two occasions.  
The first is when visitors come to pay their respects to the family of  
the host. In the second instance, black coffee is served after ver-  
y sweet dessert. The Arabic coffee is offered at the end of a visit.  
If it is offered at the beginning of the visit, the guest will take it  
to mean he is home; thus, when served early, the server says this is  
not yet done.

In the coffee cup is overfilling, when it is served, it means that  
the person serving it is upset with the guest. How much this is ack-  
nowledged I am not sure, but as a general rule we try to never overfill  
the cup. When coffee is spilled on the floor, it is viewed as a good  
luck sign.

Finally, the service method. This is a rule which I have great  
difficulty in following. When serving, the coffee should be offered  
from the oldest to the youngest person present, according to age.

Coffee is served to men and women alike, after the age of sixteen  
years old.



## Vil Eye

During one of our visits, I was shown to the house in the village Aslikon no. 51742-11, the master is Tuncay, and the color blue is popular there. All babies in fact have something blue in their heads, usually facing the entrance of the house.

It is written in the Koran, that the vil eye actually exist, so that village people believe in it. Some actual experiences of friends and relatives concerning this belief are as follows:

The first example I shall present is that of two women, in the same village, who were joint. One gave birth to a boy and the other to a girl. On the night with the baby boy came to visit the other mother, she carried the baby, her waist. Her exclamation "My good ear, your mother walked before my son", brought calamity to the baby girl. The child was separated from the waist down. The second example was told to me by a woman who concerned a healthy tree of peaches in my grandfather's garden. One day a vil eye came and said if it was a warm day, they would come again, then the peach tree lost its blossoms. The woman exulted over the beauty and healthiness of the tree. The next morning, the flowers disappeared, every peach small and shrivelled and the branches of the tree bent inwardly.

Some say that the Vil Eye are believed to be people who are lame or the blind, lame. Also, people with gaps between their teeth. Others who are blue-eyed can cause the vil eye to befall others.

To ward off the Vil Eye, a blue stone, a Koran chain, or the palm of a hand is pinned to a baby's clothes, in the ear, in the house, around the door of the house. The blue <sup>eye</sup> is drawn and sold as a sticker for the ear. Stickers from the Koran are also written on stickers, saying "The vil eye, I want last," and "may the eye of the evil become blind."

To cure the vil eye, salt and flour are mixed and a woman, who has passed her menopause period, takes a pan with hot charcoal and sprinkles the salt and flour on it. As the salt cracker, it is believed that the vil is to be away with. Another method used for curing the Vil Eye is to kill a bird and take its eyes to be buried, while Koran is read



over it. If the case, she gave him a piece of Kura who caused it, a piece of the person's clothes; if broken, burnt, and powder over it, they all the pieces must be thrown away. In a while, she informed him.

### Male and female

I have finally decided to compile one of the traditional fables. I learnt this, and my mother told it to me when I was a child. This fable, my favorite, is also a comment on the three crucial questions of the fable.

In a certain time, there lived a girl, Damdamoon, with her brother, Dandamoon. Every day he went off to fish and come home, with his catch. To enter the house, he said : Dandamoon, open the door of La'la'

I am your brother  
Your father's son.

The son of the fisherman of the wild

After a few days in this pattern, Dandamoon would open the door, take the fish, eat it, and then they would both sit down to enjoy their meal. One day their neighbor was a ghoul or jinni-like creature. He heard this and every day and figured that Dandamoon was flat with all that fish. He lay low all day and knocked on the door saying, in his own male voice : Dandamoon, open the door of La'la'

I am your brother  
Your father's son.

The son of the fisherman of the wild

Noticing this, Dandamoon only knew that he was not her brother and thus answered:

I am not your brother, I am my father  
Your voice is that of a ghoul.

After a few days, when Damdamoon would be back to meet her. When Dandamoon came in that day, Damdamoon agitatedly told him of what had happened.

He soon realized her outsmarting the ghoul. The next day, a knock came at the door and Dandamoon heard her brother's voice say:



Then he said to the Ghoul:

I am your master,

Your father's son,

In case of the first time you will

and am I the master the last and last! then the Ghoul swallowed her up. Then Dardanion came home, he still laid and laid, knocked and knocked, but no answer was forthcoming. He realized that the Ghoul had come, so he started to sing high and low, not a single rock unturned. Finally, he found the Ghoul cooking wheat. Dardanion knocked on the door and said: Alas! you ill-fated or may peace be upon you. The Ghoul answered him saying: since your salam came before your words, I am going to let you live. Otherwise, I would have let the inhabitants of this building learn the crunching of your bones. Conversation was made and after returning home he followed out the Ghoul, he asked him if he wanted to have a candle-light. The Ghoul agreed and Dardanion went off to get a pair of scorpion-like horn, while the Ghoul just stuck a scroll and a ring around, containing that he would win. As the candle light, Dardanion lowered his scorpion horns and bore the Ghoul's garment. The Ghoul stepped out saying: if you can and the Ghoul didn't. After that Dardanion and Dardanion took all the treasure they found by the Ghoul. They both married and live happy and rich for the rest of their lives. Then my grandma added, as an ending to us:

Toota Toota Ferhat (I - Conducto

(and thus ended the story)

If it sounded truthful, to you there is a sacrifice

If it sounded bad, to you there is no more

If it sounded nice, to you there is a story

If it sounded good, to you there is a song

This story always brings home, to me, how boys are taught to be really brave than sisters, even older ones. Bravery is a theme which runs throughout our culture, greatly obeyed and believed in by boys.

It never ceases to make reflect this. They are all karate and cowboy movies. Boys married and rich are also important to our society, for this theme runs throughout all our folktales.



~~2-2-13~~

the most common, relatively more difficult, which has been the main occupation of the men in the community. This is followed by agriculture, which is also important, and is the second largest occupation in the vicinity. This is followed by fishing, which is also very important, and has a definite structure. Thus, a man may ship his catch to a distant port or sell it in the city, or as a sailor.

Occupations in the city are not very widely distributed. The main occupations are: doctor, engineer, teacher, lawyer, and banker. Most of the engineers and lawyers have not been educated there. They are the two best two occupations in the condition for a remunerative sum, in explaining this, Mrs. G. C. Smith, living on the hill, who was the only woman in the town at that time. Her parents refused to marry her to any man because she took for her husband marriage. Finally a man came along and they were more than pleased to have him as a son-in-law.

There is no school, in fact, here, but a lot of privilege attached to the education of the boys in this area but it is in a very admired position.

The people here, in their own land, can choose to only plant oranges and eat their citrus fruit, while other take on other crops. In the past, the main form of occupation, for men, was to work in the fields to produce the best and largest crop in the town.

The schools are beginning to be integrated now as a result of this progressive. Education is now viewed as a very important factor for the boys and girls. The boys are heading towards finishing









occupations: females Talwa and Salma at work

46

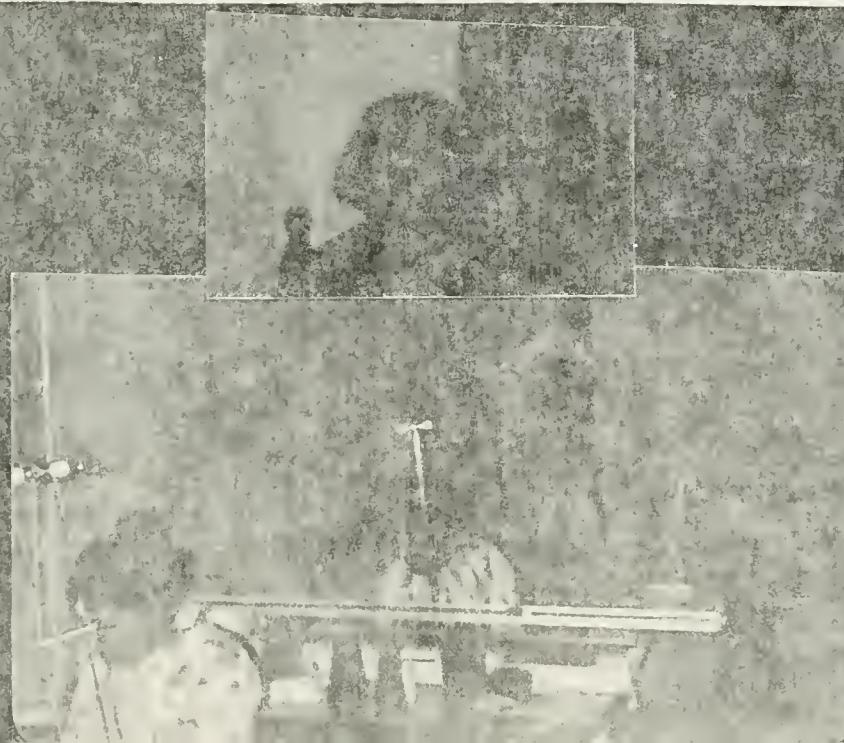






occupations: Sawiya and Zuleikha with their achievements

47





now, she is a civil servant, as the law teacher at Al-Khalidya Girls' Secondary. This course is taught in English, and it is "part-time" or "half." No more teaching, but enough for her to live comfortably and to travel, and to popularise her views freely abroad.

This will be a team work, me to help her to go to the United States. I know our initially the plan was to have Al-Thawra open a branch office, a beautiful and popular boutique in Gaza, called "Al-Bayan."

Al-Bayan is a free man in his soul. He went with his wife to the Hajj, he entered some schools in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Since he returned from schools there alone he sent his children to school, and Al-Bayan was therefore a good nursery and then a teacher. In a work war of responsibility to other wives who work in the U.S.A., for they flockled in him their children with the establishment of schools for their children. When he came back to Gaza in 1967, Suhiya and her daughters worked in the fields as farmers. For about a year and a half, they worked and tilled in the fields. Very few people actually work the land these days in the middle class. This attempt was a failure. Suhiya had a disease which bothered the whole crop and finished the crop. At a very low level of design and fashion, Suhiya was encouraged to open a shop for this purpose, by her father and husband. Her father gave each of his children a piece of land and she sold it back to him for the money. This was surprising, since her father, a millionaire, had given her so much money as she wanted, but she was not willing to part with this money. She was the first woman, in the history of Gaza, from a middle class or any other class, to dare to work a boutique. In 1977 Suhiya opened and slowly expanded till it became the now famous "Al-Bayan". Only fully fulfilled from two viewpoints, one is that she is independent, and two, she is contributing money towards helping a disabled daughter go to a special school in Jordan.

I have met my distant cousin's wife, Huda, one out of eight children who told me that her parents encouraged her and her siblings being educated.











THE WIN





نظرة  
جديدة  
للأمومة!

Motherhood: the chief occupation of women



years of marriage. She was left a widow with one baby daughter. Like Ikram, she refused all the marriage propositions made for the same reason. Having finished high school, she went to Kuwait and worked as a teacher. Now she is happy and well-off, with a house of her own, to which she returns every summer, in Gaza.

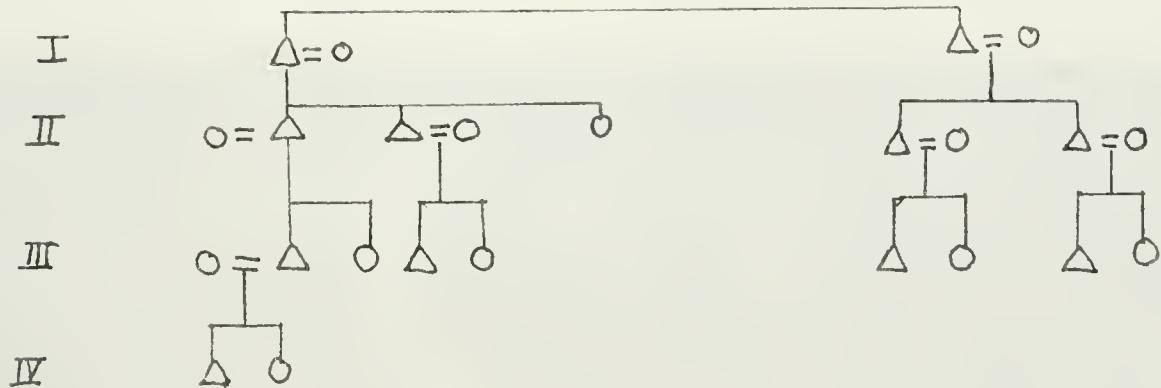
My last encounter was with Wisal. When she married at thirteen years of age, her twenty-four year old husband was extremely rich. She had two sons from him and when they began losing money, they moved to Jericho to live with her parents. Her husband could not accept the fact that her parents were supporting him and his family. One day, on the pretense that he was taking his two sons for a walk, he shot himself and his two sons. He and one of his sons died, the other son revived. At this time Wisal was two weeks pregnant. She had another son, talk about fate. With her brother's help and what little fortune her father had left her, she raised and taught her children. One is now a politician and the other an airline waiter. Only after her sons grew and worked did she consent to finally get married again. She also consented because her brothers pressured her, saying a young widow should not be left alone in the house. She remarried at the age of thirty-two.



### Family Structure

Our families, in general, are extended families. Only a few years ago everyone was living in the same house. Now every nuclear family is living in a house of their own, but they are still living next door to each other. Whenever anyone is sick or in need, all the rest of the family come together to care for that member of the family. Within this institution of marriage and family ties, second cousin marriages are prevalent and are the most favored of all marriages. This is so that the wealth stays within the family circle.

One misconception about Arab families is that the males are married to more than one woman each. Although Islam allows polygamy in terms of marrying four women at once, there are set rules which must be met. Thus, a man must treat and love all the four women equally in every which way. This tends to act as a cold-wash to those who have any ideas about marrying more than one because these standards can not be met by any human. Other factors, such as the cost of living and the woman's opinion, count to a great extent in today's society. Nowadays, no woman is going to allow her husband to marry another. Just in bringing up this topic with some of my friends, I was practically attacked. This action is practically non-existent in my society today. It did exist in the past.



A Residential Extended Family





Family structure followed by genealogy

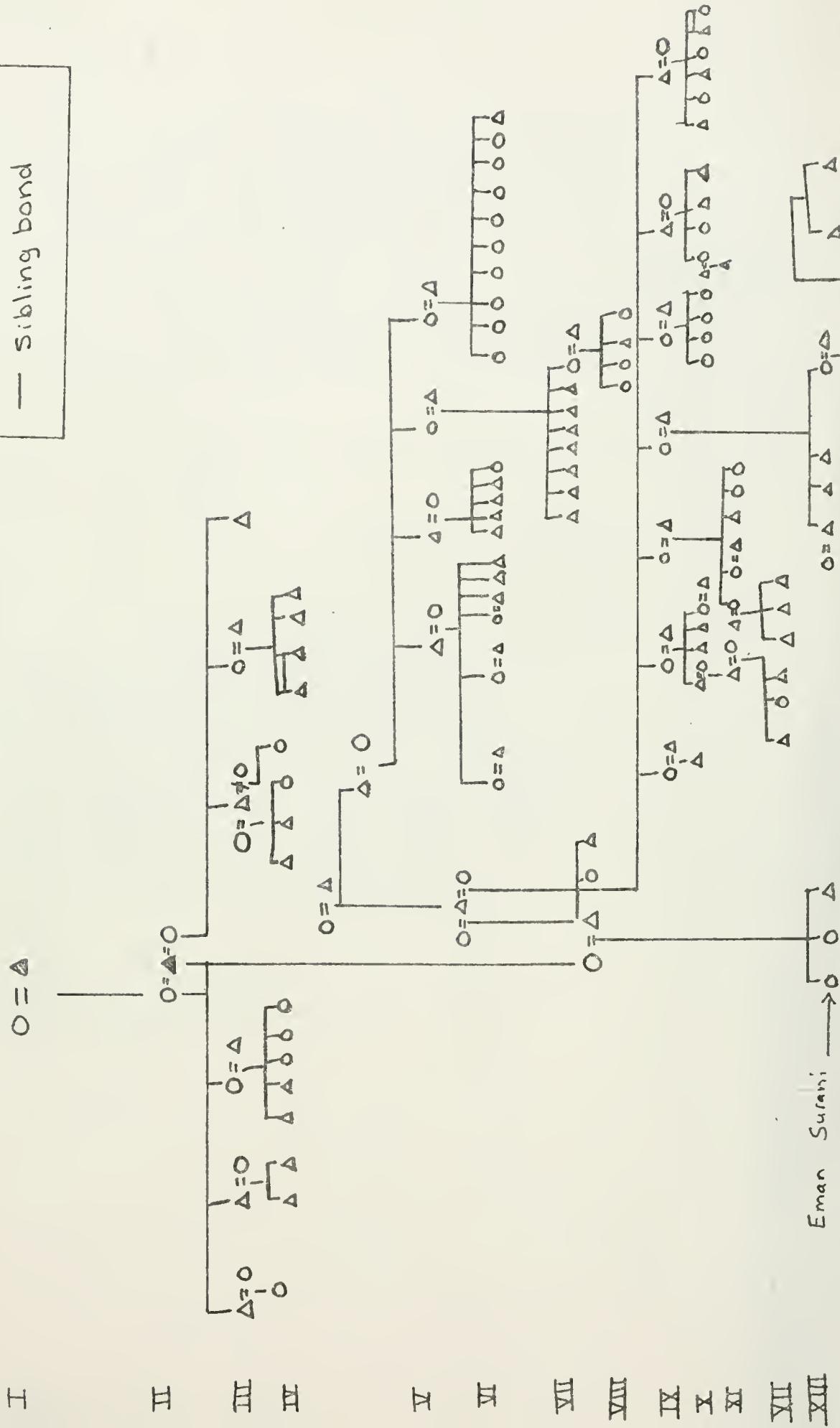
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Prophet Muhammed

O = Female	$\neq$	Divorce
$\Delta$ = Male	$\equiv$	Dead
$\equiv$ Marriage	—	Descent
— sibling bond		





Islam works as a guide of all ppl. It serves as a religion, critical thought, social life, philosophy, and art all in one. As Meltz notes, All that is true in Islam serves a purpose or has a reason behind it. For example, praying is a good physical and mental exercise, and it also helps in digesting. As Meltz notes 4 (191:19).

We are not allowed to eat pork because pigs have dirty food habits. They eat everything in sight, including their feces. They also have a worm living in them, which, if not well-cooked, can be transmitted to humans and hard to get rid of.

Drinking is not allowed because once a little drink has been indulged in, more will follow and soon the person will have lost all expression of thought and coherence.

Islam is said to be a religion for all time and place throughout history. This means that the rules or laws of Islam can be applied during any period of history, no matter how far back it was written.

Besides carrying out all the doctrines of Islam, the five pillars of Islam, and being a true believer, one has to believe in all the other God-believing religions, Christianity and Judaism.

The five pillars of Islam consist of: fasting, namazan, giving zakat to the poor or alms, praying five times a day, going on the pilgrimage to Mecca, and the belief in only one God. This last pillar is the most important. The call to prayer, which is daily called five times, sums up how important this pillar is.

God is most great!

God is most great!

I testify that there is no God but Allah.

I testify that Muhammad is the prophet of Allah.

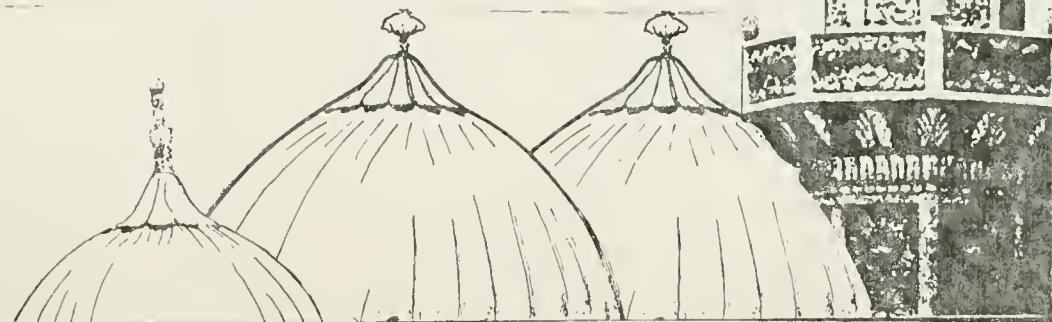
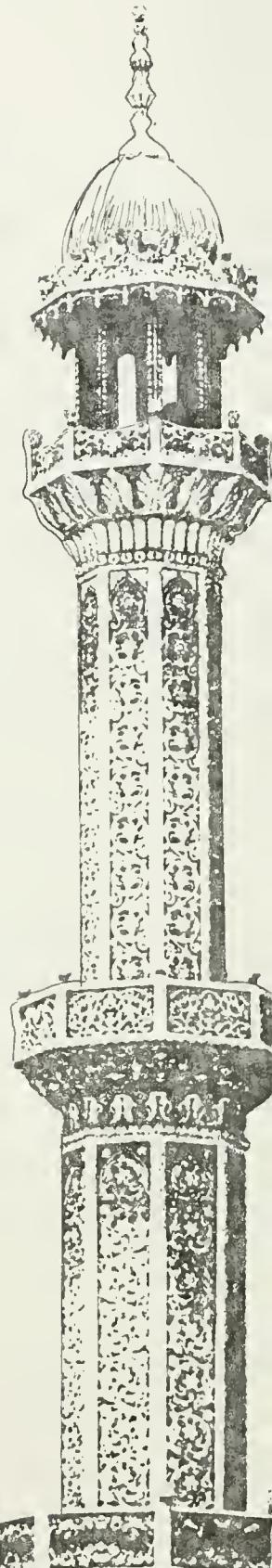
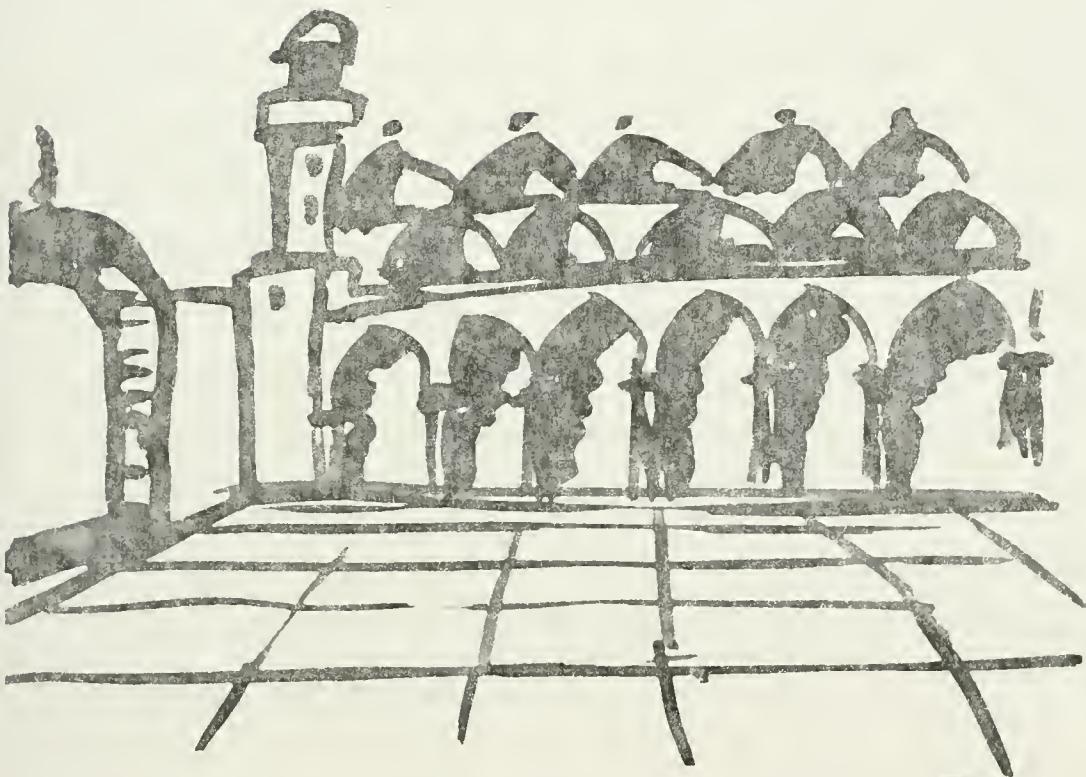
Arise and pray; arise and pray.

God is great;

there is no God but Allah!



# الرَّبْعَةُ الْمُكَلَّمَةُ





## Summary

In summary, I have written about the few but very important life events and rituals we have. Birth, marriage, death, and circumcision, the central core of our society depends on how these institutions are carried out through the generations. The life cycle, as I presented it, makes up the general over-view of the society to one not acquainted with it. Then I went on to mention the holidays existent in our society, mainly to stress the religious emphasis that this society tends towards. Hospitality I mentioned as a separate entity because it is truly an amazing feature which I have never seen anywhere else. Going on to folklore, I hope that I have presented a general idea which will help a stranger start to comprehend the workings and ways of the middle class Gazan society. Occupations is a field where I leaned mainly on female occupations since they are rare and not known by most westerners as capable of working. The family structure, compared to the west, I found of utmost interest. Finally I gave a brief account of the workings of Islam because Islam is viewed as a part of life at home not a separate institution.

In relating this short account of my country, I am trying to draw the reader into a new and strange culture by giving



a mental tour of the people, thoughts, beliefs, culture, and way of life. I have tried to somewhat analyze some of the existent traditions, folklores, and other material I presented. Thus, a foreigner would begin to think and meditated about the difference of culture and how it came to be. For now, a lot of the values of the Arab and western culture are becoming more and more alike. For example marriage, hard work, equality, motherhood,..... constitute part of every society, yet there are also differences within the culture itself. These and other questions or thoughts plague the anthropologist in his search for the beginnings and divergence of man.



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